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Letter dated 10 April 2012 from the Permanent Representative of Tajikistan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith the text of the Declaration of the Fifth Regional Economic Cooperation Conference on Afghanistan (RECCA V), held in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, on 26 and 27 March 2012 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 38, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Sirodjidin **Aslov**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 10 April 2012 from the Permanent Representative of Tajikistan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Declaration of the Fifth Regional Economic Cooperation Conference on Afghanistan (RECCA V)

A Result-oriented Partnership for Promoting Regional Integration, Stability and Prosperity

Dushanbe, Tajikistan, 26 and 27 March 2012

The Fifth Regional Economic Cooperation Conference on Afghanistan (RECCA V) met in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, on 26 and 27 March 2012 to further develop and consolidate cooperation and partnership towards promoting peace and prosperity in Afghanistan and in the region. Inaugurated by His Excellency Emomali Rahmon, President of the Republic of Tajikistan, His Excellency Hamid Karzai, President of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, His Excellency Mahmud Ahmadinejad, President of the Islamic Republic of Iran and His Excellency Asef Ali Zardari, President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, the Conference was co-chaired by His Excellency Hamrokhon Zarifi, Foreign Minister of the Republic of Tajikistan and His Excellency Zalmai Rassoul, Foreign Minister of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. High-level delegations and senior representatives from over 70 States and organizations took part in this historically significant gathering.

The participating States and organizations,

Thanking the Republic of Tajikistan for hosting and co-chairing this important gathering,

Appreciating the active participation of all States and organizations present at the Conference,

Reaffirming the commitments made by Afghanistan's neighbours on 22 December 2002 in the framework of the Kabul Declaration on Good Neighbourly Relations,

Acknowledging Afghanistan's central role as a thoroughfare of trade, transit, transport, investment and culture in the heart of Asia, and *expressing* unflinching support to the people and Government of Afghanistan to achieve peace, stability and socio-economic progress,

Commending Afghanistan's considerable progress towards peace, stability, democratization, socio-economic development and reconciliation during the last 10 years, and *expressing* support for further steps towards the full realization of these objectives,

Emphasizing that the Dushanbe Conference builds on the enduring nature of the commitments made during the previous four meetings of the Regional Economic Cooperation Conference on Afghanistan (Kabul, 2005; New Delhi, 2006; Islamabad, 2009; Istanbul, 2010),

Affirming that regional economic cooperation and integration can help exploit and develop the long-term economic potential of Afghanistan and mitigate the economic consequences of the gradual withdrawal of international combat troops in the wake of the ongoing Transition Process in Afghanistan,

Welcoming the success of the 2 November 2011 Istanbul Conference for Afghanistan: Security and Cooperation in the Heart of Asia and its outcome, the Istanbul Process on Regional Security and Cooperation for a Secure and Stable Afghanistan, and *anticipating* the follow-up Ministerial Conference to be held in Kabul on 14 June 2012, as well as its relevant preparatory processes,

Welcoming the commitment of the United Nations and its programmes in the region to play an active and contributing role in the implementation of the outcomes of RECCA V,

Acknowledging the need to further advance and consolidate, in the framework of a pragmatic, outcome-oriented, time-bound and measureable approach, the goals of confidence-building, peacemaking, security, socio-economic advancement, human betterment, trade expansion, foreign investment and resource mobilization in the region,

Welcoming the commitments made at the 5 December 2011 Bonn International Conference on Afghanistan, and the enduring strong international support demonstrated for Afghanistan's continued progress towards stability and development, including during the Transformation Decade of 2015-2024,

Reaffirming their commitment to collectively combat the menaces of terrorism, extremism, transnational organized crime and illicit narcotics production and trafficking,

Recognizing that the multifaceted challenges of globalization and regional integration, as well as traditional and non-traditional issues threatening national and human security, require a more coherent and well-coordinated response at the regional level,

Noting with satisfaction the benefits of open bilateral and multilateral relationships forged between Afghanistan and its regional and international partners over the last decade,

Appreciating the progress made in expanding cooperation across the region during the last decade in the areas of political stability and security, trade and investment, economy and infrastructure, information and communications, strengthening society and culture and human resource development,

Expressing strong conviction that regional partnerships towards advancing economic cooperation and integration, regional connectivity, free and fair trade, joint investments and creation of a favourable regional business environment would further promote growth and development, raise living standards of the people throughout the region and provide further dynamic benefits and synergies to the region and the world in the long term,

Declaring that core, coordinated economic and development strategies at national levels should support the overall regional integration vision,

Drawing attention to the issues of Afghan refugees and appreciating the assistance extended to them by the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, the Islamic Republic of Iran and Afghanistan's other neighbouring States,

Emphasizing regional ownership and leadership of the work towards comprehensive regional connectivity and its importance in promoting region-wide confidence, prosperity and integration,

Underlining the vast potential for regional cooperation in new and emerging areas of common interest, including tourism, education, health, science and technology, non-traditional security issues, agriculture and forestry, energy, telecommunication, industry, environment and regional and international issues,

Hereby reiterate their determination to promote lasting confidence and partnership for the purpose of securing peace, stability and socio-economic progress in Afghanistan and in the region, and concur as follows:

I. Principles of cooperation

Cooperation between Afghanistan and its RECCA partners is based on:

(a) Adherence to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations;

(b) Adherence to international law as applicable;

(c) Respect for each other's national sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence;

(d) Adherence to the principle of non-intervention in the internal affairs of other States;

(e) Promotion of a multifaceted cooperation and regional integration strategy based on mutual trust, benefit, equality and dialogue.

II. Projects and policy priorities for promoting cooperation

Informed by the three themes of RECCA V, the participants discussed the measures towards the time-bound achievement of the goals contained in this Declaration and stated their commitment to take serious and measurable steps towards the implementation of the following priority projects, some of which have been under consideration of regional programmes and organizations.

A. Development through building infrastructure

Railways

1. Components:

(a) Completion of Kolkhozobod-Panji Poyen (Tajikistan, 50 km) and Shir Khan Bandar-Kunduz (Afghanistan, 75 km) (1435 mm gauge);

(b) Completion of Jalalabad-Torkham (Afghanistan, 75 km)-Landi Kutal (Pakistan, 23 km) (1435 mm gauge and 1676 mm gauge, respectively);

(c) Completion of Chaman (Pakistan)-Spinboldak (Afghanistan) (1676 mm gauge, 11.5 km) — Phase I and Spinboldak to Kandahar-Phase II;

(d) Completion of the Fourth Phase of Khaf-Herat (Sangon-Herat) (Iran, 81 km) — Shamtegh-Herat (Afghanistan, 124 km) (1435 mm gauge) extending to Chah Bahar;

(e) Completion of Atamyrat-Imomnazar (Turkmenistan, 90 km) and Aqina-Andkhoy-Shiberghan (Afghanistan, 108 km) (1520 mm gauge);

(f) Completion of the feasibility study and beginning of construction on the Shiberghan-Mazar-i-Sharif-Kunduz (367 km) line (1435 mm gauge).

Highways

2. Rehabilitation of Salang tunnel (2.86 km) and construction of bypass (Pul-e-Matak-Shibar-Doshi, 275 km).

3. Upgrading and completion of the second lane of the Kabul-Jabul Siraj Highway (52 km) and completion of at least 150 km of the East-West Corridor.

4. Completion of a segment of at least 100 km of 253 km of the Afghanistan Ring Road (between Armalek and Ghormach).

Energy

5. TAPI [Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India gas pipeline]: Completion of financing arrangement, selection of transporter and operator; construction work under way by 2014.

6. Completion of Afghanistan Regional Electric Grid:

(a) Construction of 500 kV Transmission Line from Mary to Atamyrat (Turkmenistan, 300 km)-Andkhoy (Afghanistan, 42 km);

(b) Construction of 500 kV Transmission Line Andkhoy-Mazar-i-Sharif-Puli Khumri-Kabul;

(c) Construction of 500 kV Transmission Line Sangtuda (Tajikistan)-Puli Khumri (Afghanistan).

7. Completion of the CASA-1000 Project:

(a) Construction of 500 kV AC Transmission Line from Datka (Kyrgyzstan) to Khojand (Tajikistan) — 470 km;

(b) Construction of 500 kV DC Transmission Line Sangtuda (Tajikistan, 117 km)-Kabul-Torkham (Afghanistan, 562 km)-Peshawar (Pakistan, 71 km) with a capacity of 1300 MW.

8. Construction of Kokcha multi-purpose dam (450 MW capacity).

9. Construction of the Afghanistan-Tajikistan Gas Pipeline (ATGP) (Sheberghan-Mazar-i-Sharif-Hayratan-Kaldar-Aywaj-Kolkhozobod (235 km in Afghanistan and 110 km in Tajikistan).

B. Human resource development, vocational training, labour market facilitation

10. Establishment of a technical vocational training centre in Tajikistan for Afghanistan and the region (in the areas of mining, railways, construction, operation, maintenance, disaster risk management, health care, etc.), and continuation/expansion of other vocational training programmes in relevant sectors, as requested by Afghanistan.

11. Improvement of regional labour markets and facilitating skilled labour exchange at the regional level, including productive reintegration of Afghan refugees living in neighbouring countries.

12. Capacity-building for the establishment of joint ventures between entrepreneurs in industrial, extractive, agricultural and other sectors between Afghanistan and regional countries.

C. Investment, trade, transit and border management

13. Development of cross-border economic zones for mutual investment activities between Afghanistan and neighbouring countries.

14. Harmonization and simplification of customs' procedures, including the use of single window and interoperable national paperless trade systems.

15. Transit-transport agreements with neighbouring countries connecting Central Asia with the South Asian Free Trade Agreement Area through Afghanistan.

D. Regional disaster risk management and rehabilitation

16. Establishment and operationalization of a Regional Disaster Management Centre with the following purposes: (1) installing early warning systems; (2) developing and implementing risk-reducing preventive measures; (3) rehabilitation of affected areas and populations; (4) providing support and capacity-building for National Disaster Management authorities; and (5) other necessary measures.

E. Regional fibre-optic connectivity

17. Connecting Afghanistan's fibre-optic system with regional fibre-optic systems.

III. Final dispositions

The participants extend broad support for the above projects with the purpose of studying them further to make possible concrete progress in financing and implementation in the short and medium term.

International financial institutions and development banks are especially called upon to take a liberal approach to financing such regionally beneficial projects.

The participants reiterate the importance of nominating RECCA Focal Points (at the senior official level) and request them to be communicated to the RECCA Secretariat by 1 July 2012.

The participants decided to commemorate, in December 2012, the 10th anniversary of the Kabul Declaration on Good Neighbourly Relations to further strengthen relations between Afghanistan and its neighbours through developing result-oriented strategies and policies for a more comprehensive and forward-looking partnership.

The RECCA V participants once again thank the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan for extending exemplary hospitality to the delegates and making excellent arrangements for the Conference.

The participants took note of the multiple interests expressed by Afghanistan's friends and partner States, including the Islamic Republic of Iran, to host the next RECCA meeting.